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SERMON

PREACHED IN S. MARK'S CHURCH, TORONTO JUNCTION,
BY THE REV. C. E. THOMSON, M. A.

—BEFORE—

L. O. L. PURPLE STAR

NO. 602



CARLTON

—ON—

DOMINION DAY JULY 1ST, 1894.

Price Per Copy 10 Cents.

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

C. T. THOMSON, JOB PRINTER.

*To the Worshipful Master and Members of
Purple Star L. O. L. 602, Carlton.*

*This Sermon is respectfully dedicated by their
obedient servant,*

C. E. THOMSON.

Righteousness Exalteth a Nation

PROVERBS XIV. 34.

To-day is a Birthday. On Whitsun Day we kept the birthday of the Christian Church. Last Sunday we kept the birthday of St. John Baptist, a preacher of righteousness.

Why, it may be asked, do we keep birthdays ?

1. I think the chief reason is to express our belief in Divine Providence—that God ruleth in the Kingdoms of men (Dan. iv: 17, 25, 32). As often as we celebrate a birthday, we reject chance, and recognize design ; we touch one link in the great chain of cause and effect, and acknowledge its importance, and the wisdom of Him who placed it there.

2. Perhaps another reason is to manifest our love and gratitude to our elders. It may be the birthday of one of our grand-parents, to whom as the pioneer settlers of this country, most of us owe our happy surroundings, our smiling fields, our thriving villages, our busy towns, our thronged cities : where were these, when our grand-parents broke the silence of the woods, endured loneliness and scarcity, and toiled patiently, not more for themselves than for generations unborn ? How much do we owe to the patience, the courage, and the industry, of that generation ! And so long as they are spared to us, how on each anniversary ought we to show our love and veneration for those who found a wilderness, and left a garden of Eden, who made for us a habitable, desirable, pleasant, land, and, if they are dead, died leaving us their good name, and the result of their self-denying loyalty and labour ! The United Empire Loyalists, one class of these brave pioneers, have passed away, their children are nearly all gone, and their grand-children have lived to middle age, and beyond it, to hand on to the next generation their two great traditional principles, Godliness and Loyalty.

It may be the birthday of a parent ; Oh let us not forget what we owe them. For us, if they were Godfearing, when we could do nothing for ourselves, they thought, and planned, and prayed. To their unselfish care we owe our preservation, nurture, education, the hopes that animate us, the desire to realize those hopes. We can never fully know the sacrifices they have made, the time they have given, the toil they have undergone, the privations they have experienced, for our advantage ; and when their birthdays come, we should be glad to testify our feelings, glad so long as they are spared to rejoice in our happiness and to know themselves beloved and respected ; glad, if they are gone hence, to recall their memory, and to pay our oft repeated tribute to departed love and worth.

I have said that to-day is a birthday, it is the anniversary of the birth of the mother country of many of you. All of you born in Canada under twenty seven years old are natives of the Dominion of Canada.

It is that space of time since the various provinces four of them, at any rate, were incorporated into one : we, who are older, are by birth Upper Canadians, Lower Canadians, Nova Scotians and so on. You younger ones are children of the widely wing spreading mother, which touching the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, extends over nearly the whole region north of great Lakes a region 3500 miles in width, 3100 miles in depth, with a brief history, but with undeveloped capacity, with a vast variety of resources and a future which no man can foresee : as yet she is comparatively poor, struggling with difficulties, as most young housekeepers do, with enemies out of doors and indoors. Yet she has the confidence of our grandmother Britain, who has the experience of ages, and Canada will justify that confidence, and the wisdom of the men who planned and carried out Confederation ; most of these are gone to their rest : peace be with them, and the reward of those who serve their country, and desire her to go on and prosper.

But the words "go on and prosper" recall us to the text. What is progress ? What is prosperity ? What is the best meaning of these words ? Is it not to be found in this—"Righteousness exalteth a nation" ? With nations, as with individuals, there is sometimes movement, which is taken for progress : but it may not be in the right direction. They who built the Ark moved slowly ; but all their movement was towards God. They who built the Tower of Babel moved faster, but they moved away from God. Abraham was a slow going countryman, but he walked with God : Lot—attracted to Sodom,—became a citizen and how narrow was his escape ! The days of Solomon were glorious days for Israel—gold and silver in abundance, wide dominions (1 Kings iv. 20-21), extending from the Euphrates to the Nile—yet how near to a downfall ! And so you may go on and search history, and you shall find always a reverse following prosperity in ungodly nations ; and you shall find no nation so far as we have authentic records which has not come to decay within a thousand years, except Christian nations. They only seem to possess lasting vitality combined with progressive enterprise, for "Righteousness exalteth a nation". To progress, to go on, involves a right direction, towards God, and a right method, in God's ways. Anything else will prove illusory and deceptive.

There can be no doubt as to the material progress of our country—Three hundred and fifty years ago Jacques Cartier found it entirely savage. Two hundred and twenty years ago the total European population was 3418. One hundred and fifty years ago the population European, or of European descent, was 37232.

On this day twenty seven years ago four provinces joined, whose area was 300000 square miles ; now we have seven Provinces and four Territories whose area is 3,000,000 square miles and population between four and five millions. Our Railway System spans the Continent, and our trade is daily growing in volume and importance. Our population is growing by natural increase as well as by immigration, and we lose little by emigration. Of course as yet the centres of population and enterprise and trade

will fluctuate ; comparative elevation and depression will be experienced. But on the whole progress and peace and plenty have been our lot, and during this quarter of a century our country has been gradually becoming more and more consolidated into one homogeneous whole ; with the upspringing of a new generation, and the admixture of foreign elements by immigration, we are rapidly growing into one composite people ; and if our distinctly provincial character is becoming obliterated by circumstances, we have the satisfaction of knowing that we are getting to be more and more an important factor in the composition of the greatest empire the world has seen. We may indeed be proud to acknowledge the little island over the Atlantic as our head, but we are at the same time conscious that, together with India, Africa, and Australia, we constitute the body, of this magnificent realm, and that we are so situated as necessarily to be the most vitally important part of that realm, forming, as we do, the greatest magazine of imperial supply, and the most direct and safe channel of imperial communication. All honour, then, to those, whose patriotism guided by far reaching wisdom saw the opportunity and improved it twenty seven years ago. So far as Canada and Great Britain are concerned, the experiment has been a marked success. Imperial interests, and Imperial power, have been wonderfully advanced and increased. That Britannia rules the waves, and is mistress of the Sea, has been claimed and acknowledged for many years ; it can now be said truly that a traveller can make the circuit of the earth, without stepping off either British soil, or the deck of a British ship, and there are few places on the line of his travels where he will not find himself protected, not merely by the sentimental idea of Britain's power, but by the actual domination of British law ; so that to be a British subject means far more personal freedom and dignity in any part of the world than the possession of Roman citizenship in the proudest days of republican or imperial Rome. There are indications at the present time of a still farther advance towards the unification of interests among the wide-spread members of the British Empire, and in the Conference which is now being held at Ottawa we see assembled together representatives not only of Great Britain and Canada, but also of Australia, and Tasmania, and New Zealand, and the Cape of Good Hope, thriving and sturdy offshoots from the old parental stock, taking counsel for mutual encouragement and help, and for common protection and defence. Possibly the fathers of Canadian Confederation had something like this in their minds, but they could hardly have expected their labours in this direction to have borne such fruit in the short space of twenty seven years. It is the duty of us all, I think, to hope and pray that the result of this Conference may be such a complete and lasting consolidation of Greater Britain, as may, under God's good Providence be beneficial, not only to the countries directly interested, but to the whole world. It is no small honour to our Country that it should be chosen as the place for such a meeting, and it is no doubtful indication of the importance of Canada that it should be the theatre of deliberations

full of so much consequence to the entire human family.

At the same time, we are warned by events which now and then take place that the Millennium has not begun, and that men's selfishness and passions and prejudices still are, and probably for long will continue to be, serious obstacles in the way of harmony and prosperity. Actual warfare between nations may be suspended for a time, but everyone can see that mutual jealousies and suspicions are keeping up a state of irritation, which some casual occurrence may at any moment develop into open strife. What ever may, by God's grace, be the case with individuals, it is evident that nations have not thoroughly learned the Divine lesson of love and obedience to the golden rule "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them", and probably it is fear of one another, rather than a higher motive, which restrains them from violence. But we see the tendency of selfishness and covetousness in the internal unrest which seems to pervade all countries, in the conflicts more or less open, between authority and submission, between capital and labour, between property and poverty. For this condition of things no one is altogether blameless, for all have forgotten in a great degree the precepts and the example of our Lord and Master. He, whose Kingdom is not of this world, would have His professed followers unworldly and unselfish, not seeking every man, his own welfare, but loving one another with a pure heart fervently. Leaving the world to return to Heaven He did not leave Himself without a witness, but established His Church to be the abiding witness to His Divinity, presenting to the eyes and hearts of men a continual miracle, which should be more convincing than any of His own wonderful works. But if, as has been said, modern Christianity has come to be nothing better than a civilized heathenism, or if it approaches this character, the Church has, to that extent, failed in her office as the witness to Christ. Looking back over the pages of history, can we not see melancholy evidences of this failure, and can we not see in the ambition, the jealousies, the rivalries of Christianity the reason for its feeble hold upon the hearts and lives of men? Christianity in its true conception is Socialism sanctified by the self sacrifice of Christ, purified by the power of the Holy Ghost, and elevated by the hope of a heavenly and perfect eternity. If we see it as it is actually, Socialism stands apart from Christ, will have nothing to do with Him or His, repudiates not only earthly, but Divine authority, is actuated solely by sordid motives and earth-born passions, and when carried to its logical extreme of Anarchism and Atheism, throws to the winds all human love and duty and pity, utterly ignores the over-ruling providence of God, and denies the great facts of immortal existence, and eternal retribution. Within the last week, after some years of similar awful events, we have seen this red-handed Socialism gone mad slaying the chief ruler of France, and triumphing in the woful deed. The murder of this man, worthy and just according to his lights, is an instance of what may be expected from the highest civilization unenlivened by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And in many less startling, because less con-

spicuous, instances, we have seen, time and time again, the working of this same spirit of rampant-untempered socialism, and are made to feel how helpless the Church is to allay the storm, to the raising of which she has too much contributed. One melancholy feature of the prevailing godlessness of our time is the frequency of suicide. It is said that even in our quiet, and comparatively moral, City of Toronto, there have been six suicides within the last month. If this be unhappily true, it indicates a condition of irreligious godless despair prevailing our community, which leads those who are sorely tried by adversity, or by the wickedness of others, to seek relief from their troubles, not in God's love, but in what they wrongly suppose to be oblivion and annihilation.

For all the evils of our social condition the true remedy is not despair, but faith, faith which endures, as seeing Him, Who is invisible now, but Who upholds all things, guides all things, by the word of His power, Who came to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and Who shall yet come to take vengeance on them that obey not God, and to be glorified in His Saints and admired in them that believe. But before that time the world must be turned upside down, and many customs which have corrupted the world must be changed by the power of God. And God fulfils Himself in many ways, and it rests altogether with men themselves whether this radical change from prevailing wrong to triumphant right shall be effected amid the lurid fires of sanguinary revolution, or by the gentle influences of the Spirit of God. To this end let us labour, for labour is prayer, and while we labour let us in our lives as well as with our lips pray in the words of last Sunday's collect that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by God's governance; that His Church may joyfully serve Him in all godly quietness.

It is too much, however to expect that all will be smooth water and calm progress for the Ark of Christ's Church. It will not be until all or nearly all the baptised members of Christ are steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, that the Church which they make up will safely pass the waves of this troublesome world. Christ came not to send peace on earth, but a sword, and the progress of His religion has all along been marked by strife, and even bloodshed. And no wonder, for the world has to be subdued to the obedience of Christ, and worldliness fights long, and dies hard. It would not matter so much if the struggle were entirely with outside enemies; but in every century and in every country, worldliness within the Church has been the great trouble, and Christ's worst foes have been those of His own household. And so it has come to pass that from time to time the religion of Jesus has found itself involved in the jealousies and ambitions of worldly men, and has been used by them as a pretext for furthering their unworthy designs. And so, I fear, it will continue to be until men have really learned that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and that righteousness exalteth a nation.

Great Britain and Ireland have been no strangers to this mixture

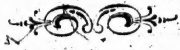
of religion and worldliness. From the very beginning almost there has been more or less of a contest going on between the ambition of the Roman Pontiff, and the sturdy spirit of national independence. If you look closely into the motives and origin of the strifes that have disturbed the peace of the world for the last thousand years, you will find most of them resolving themselves into this one question of the Papal Supremacy. It is not my purpose now to weary you with any argument on this subject, but simply to say that I consider the claim untenable on any ground, either of Scripture, or of true church tradition, or of universal consent, or of expediency, or of common sense practicability. Our personal interest in it is not so very great at present, but still it demands consideration and watchfulness, and we cannot be too careful to guard against the smaller and more insidious advances and aggressions with which we are familiar. The great difficulty is that the Roman Church holds, along with considerable error, much that is true, and much that belongs not only to her, but to all the Catholic Church throughout all ages. The Church of England and the Church of Rome have, from the beginning been members of the one whole family in heaven and earth, and therefore it cannot but be a cause of additional sorrow that the latter should, by her own act, have broken the bond of love, and suspended the communion which should exist between sister churches.

From time to time it has been necessary for the Church of England to protest against usurpation, both in church and state; and perhaps at no time was it more necessary than at that epoch which you as a body have been established to commemorate. Whatever may have been the defects of the first two Stuart Kings, it is undeniable that they were faithful personally to what they conceived to be the interest of true religion. But the last two kings of that line were unhappily marked contrasts to their predecessors, and, especially James II., tried hard, by making the most of his royal prerogative, to bring the church and kingdom under bondage. It is difficult for us to place ourselves in the position which the loyal churchmen occupied in those days. These are times of indifference to religion, whereas, then men thought much, and felt deeply on this matter. Had I lived in those days, I suppose my loyalty to the person of the sovereign would have prevented my taking part in the revolution of 1688. And yet my duty to religion would have urged me to resist the coming danger of subjection to Rome. The seven Bishops who went to the Tower acted right, and they acted right again five of them, in refusing to transfer their allegiance to William III. Again, had I lived in Hanoverian times, I could not have supported the Pretender, against the dynastic change which had been accomplished, and the King reigning in fact through the Providence of God. The anointed of the Lord, even though he be far from faultless, ought, as we are reminded in to-day's first morning lesson, to be regarded with loyalty. Whatever may have been the shortcomings of the Stuart Kings, they were native born, and in those days this was a strong argument in their favour, although

now we have become so accustomed to a mixture of races, that a native sovereign would not seem a necessity to many. We may well be thankful, however that, there does not appear to be any probability of failure in our native succession, for the present Royal Family is so numerous, that there is no danger of the throne being filled by an outsider. Now that the constant government of Sovereigns pledged to maintain the independence of the Church, and to resist aggressions on the side of Rome is well assured, we may remember with gratitude those who two hundred years ago stood forward in defence of this principle. We may not perhaps approve of everything that was said and done, but we must remember that two centuries ago the memory of cruel deeds committed in the name of religion by Romanists in Ireland was fresh in men's memories, and that it was no wonder if their resolve was stern and somewhat heated with anger—a resolve that these things should not happen again. It is unfortunately true that things of this sort did happen again; for it is very difficult to allay religious or political animosities. And it is possible that we have not yet seen the last of such atrocities, for the advance of material improvement does not appear to bring with it the increase of a Christ-like spirit. And so we, in this generation, not only have no right to blame, but we are constrained to praise, those who in such trying times fought for principles which they deemed essential to civil and religious liberty. We cannot help admiring the courage of those who closed the gates of Derry, and their constancy in maintaining a stubborn defence for more than three months of danger, want, and starvation. And you will remember that the foremost and bravest of the defenders of Derry was a clergyman of the Church, who did not then give up his military service, but, perhaps with ill-judging zeal, was present, and died a year after at the Battle of the Boyne. I would have you to observe that the Church of England is, and always has been, the most active promoter of true political liberty, and the most effectual bulwark against oppression from any quarter. I would like this to be always remembered by the Sons of the Church when they hear her found fault with, and by those outside of the Church when they are tempted to blame her. With all her defects, she is the best rallying point for the forces of truth and freedom, and in her strength is the security of the whole empire from aggression and conquest.

We welcome you here this afternoon, not as strangers but as friends and allies. We are grateful for any institution whose object it is to maintain the stability of the British Empire, and the permanence of our connection therewith. If Orangeism is anything, it is loyal to the Crown, and in Canada this means as much as it does in Ireland. In both countries there are those who would sever this connection if they could—nay, I believe there have been times—say forty five years back, in our history, when even some Orangemen themselves were disloyal; but they were the exception, and not the rule, and the circumstances in 1849 were very aggravating. But that is all happily long past, and in the Orangemen of

to-day I think we have a body of men who, while they desire to oppress no one, are yet resolved that no British liberty shall be undermined by secret scheming, and that no British right shall be taken away by outward aggression. If this is true, remember the way and means thereto is, First to stand fast yourselves in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free ; this does not mean license to sin against God or your neighbours. Secondly to recollect always that though Commercial and Agricultural prosperity is a grand thing, and that we have been much blessed in this respect, and hope to be more blessed in the future, still it is righteousness, and righteousness only, which exalteth a nation, and ensures the continued blessing of God. To you Orangemen, as forming a large and important part of the population, we look to do your part—a large part—a conspicuous part—in promoting righteousness, not only by talking for it, voting for it, if necessary fighting for it, but by doing what is more needful and more difficult, following peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.



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